Garage & Storage Safety

Enjoy peace of mind. *SDART* preparing today.

Household chemicals - potentially lethal

The ground movement of earthquakes can cause chemical products you have stored in the garage and under household sinks to spill and potentially mix. These materials can be silent killers or can cause serious injury.

Before a disaster - safety with chemicals

Secure all chemicals so that they cannot fall, break, and mix.

- Identify poisons, toxins, and solvents in breakable containers on open shelves.
- Remove all heavy objects from upper shelves, especially around the car.
- Secure open shelves with nylon webbing (available at hardware stores, boating supply stores, and many camping supply stores) or bungee-type straps. (Do not use regular bungee straps with the heavy metal hooks at either end. These may become dislodged and cause serious eye or other injuries.)
- Store paints, gasolines, and other flammable liquids away from natural gas water heaters.
- Read the labels on all products you purchase.
- Separate the chemicals according to manufacturers' suggestions to prevent harmful interactions if broken containers should allow the chemicals to mix. For example, household bleach mixed with ammonia creates extremely deadly chlorine gas.
- Know what steps to take if chemicals are spilled.
- Dispose of any hazardous materials that are no longer used.

After a disaster - safety with chemicals

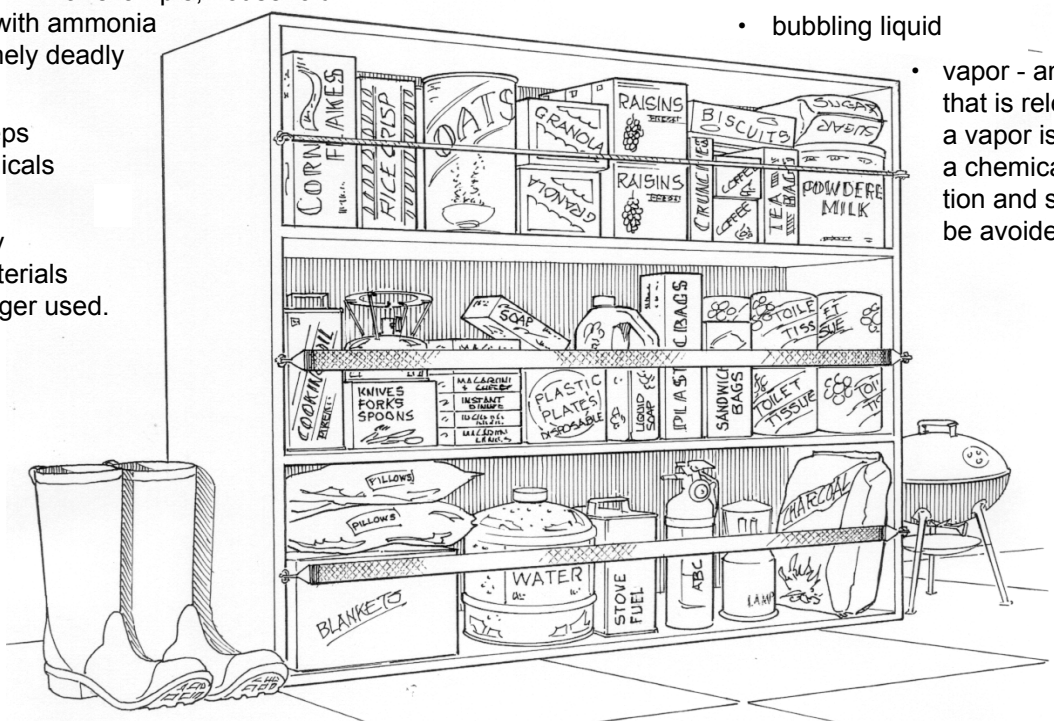
- Always assume that spilled chemicals are toxic.
- Do not immediately approach spilled chemicals in your haste to clean them up. Mixed chemicals can be extremely hazardous.
- Close off the room where the spill has occurred.
- Mark the outside of the room with the problem, for example, "spilled chemicals inside - use caution."
- Notify your Block Coordinator of the spill. Have the Block Coordinator instruct the Communications Team to report this to the amateur radio operators located at the closest Community Center.

Ways hazardous materials enter the body:

- inhalation (breathing) - the most common way
- absorption - through skin or eyes
- ingestion - swallowing
- injection - penetrating the skin or falling on something that punctures the skin

Indicators that a spill has taken place

- pungent or noxious odor - never intentionally get close enough to smell it
- bubbling liquid
- vapor - anything that is releasing a vapor is having a chemical reaction and should be avoided



Protecting stored foods when the power goes out

- Keep refrigerator and freezer doors closed as much as possible.

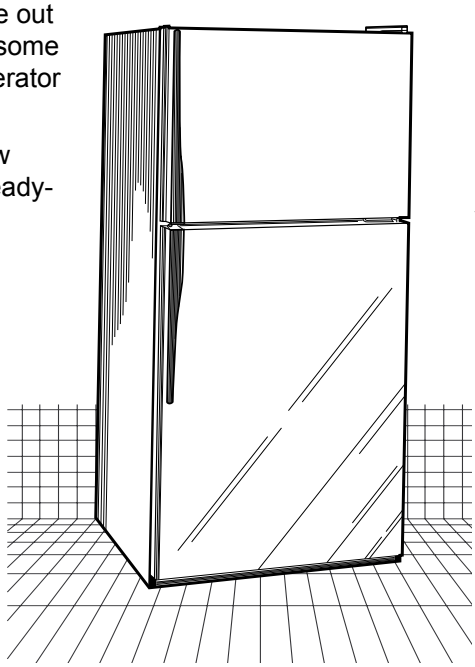
  A full refrigerator will maintain safe temperatures for up to six hours.

  A full freezer will maintain safe temperatures for up to two days; a half-full freezer for one day.

  Discard at-risk refrigerated foods that are warmer than 45° Fahrenheit. If in doubt, throw it out.

- If you think the power will be out for several days, try to find some ice to pack inside the refrigerator and freezer.

  Remember to keep your raw foods separate from your ready-to-eat foods.



Foods to be concerned about

- Foods are categorized into groups:

  A. **Potentially hazardous foods** are the most important. These include meats, fish, poultry, dairy products, eggs and egg products, soft cheeses, cooked beans, cooked rice, cooked potatoes, cooked pasta, custards, puddings, etc.

  B. Some foods **may not be hazardous** but the quality may be affected. These foods include salad dressings, mayonnaise, butter, margarine, produce, hard cheeses, etc.

  C. Some foods are **safe**. These are carbonated beverages, unopened bottled juices, ketchup, mustard, relishes, jams, peanut butter, barbecue sauces, etc.

When do I save and when do I throw out food?

- Refrigerated foods should be safe as long as the power is out no more than a few hours and the doors have been kept closed. **Potentially hazardous foods** should be discarded if they warm up above 45°F.
- Frozen foods which are still frozen are not a problem.

  If **potentially hazardous foods** are thawed but still have ice crystals, you should use them as soon as possible.

  - If **potentially hazardous foods** are thawed and warmer than 45°F, you should discard them.

How do I know if the food is unsafe to eat?

- You cannot rely upon appearance or odor. Never taste food to determine its safety.
- Some foods may look and smell fine, but if they've been warm too long, food poisoning bacteria may have grown enough to make you sick.
- If possible, use a thermometer to check the temperature of the foods. If potentially hazardous foods are colder than 45°F, they are safe.

What happens when the power goes back on?

- Allow time for refrigerators to reach the proper temperature of lower than 45°F before restocking. Start with all fresh foods.

Remember - when in doubt, throw it out.